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ANNUAL REPORT

BENEFITS AND COUNSELING BRANCH

BENEFITS AND SERVICES DIVISION

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL

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## Section I

### Major Accomplishments and Significant Developments

1 July 1959 - 30 June 1960

Included in this report is a statistical summary on the various Branch programs. This statistical data reveals that there were significant increases in Branch activity.

It should be noted that the scope and man-hours devoted to Branch programs cannot be gauged by statistical reporting of cases handled. Within each activity, cases handled will require a varying degree of time and effort. For example, many death cases require extensive after-hours activity and some require none. Each death case requires extensive contact with next-of-kin, liaison within the Agency and with other Federal agencies and often with private attorneys. While some cases can be fully processed in a few weeks, some cases may require months of regular effort. The same is true with medical claims, retirement, and our other programs.

#### Casualty Program

1. There was a continuance of the excellent relationships between the Branch and operating offices. In addition, our reporting and liaison procedures were thoroughly tested during this reporting period by many difficult, sensitive, and time-consuming death cases, including suicides and some unusual overseas deaths. While improvement is always sought, our present procedures have proven to be more than adequate in fulfilling this extensive Branch responsibility.

2. Branch representatives continued discussions with senior casualty personnel of the military services in a further effort to improve procedures for handling deaths of employees under military cover.

3. One hundred twenty-three serious illness cases, mostly psychiatric, and 34 death cases were handled by the Branch. Of the 34 deaths, 28 were employees and 6 were dependents. Four retiree deaths were also handled. Causes of employee deaths were as follows: heart attack, 9; cancer, 8; accidental, 4; suicide, 2; cerebral, 2; miscellaneous diseases, 3. Seventeen decedents were under age 50; 14 were under age 45; and 10 were under age 40.

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Missing-in-action cases

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Retirement Program

1. The most significant increase occurred in the number of retirement interviews conducted, 687 as compared with 531 during the previous period. Considering that many of these interviews require several hours of discussion and analysis, the total effect of these interviews on Branch time was staggering. The increase may have resulted from the Agency-wide attention given to retirement as well as from the many group briefings conducted by Branch personnel.

2. There was only a slight decrease in the number of employees actually retiring, 51 as compared with 53 during the previous period. This statistical similarity occurred even though many eligible employees deferred retirement until their eligibility for the new Federal Health Benefits had been established. Of the 51 retirements, 24 were disability, 22 were optional, 2 were mandatory, 2 were re-employed annuitants and 1 was discontinued service.

3. The Branch Chief and a representative of the Office of the Comptroller met with the Director, Bureau of Retirement and Insurance to explore means of properly documenting cases of [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This matter culminated in an adequate internal procedure and an agreement with the Bureau of Retirement and Insurance for handling such cases.

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4. The Branch identified employees who would become eligible for retirement during 1959, 1960, and 1961.

5. As a result of experience in one case, a review was started of all super-grade personnel folders to ensure that a proper identification of creditable service could be made when needed.

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance

1. Personalized FEGLI certificates, reflecting changes in coverage, were prepared for each employee having this insurance.

25X1C 2. Because of difficulties experienced in several cases, a review was made of all [REDACTED] personnel folders to ensure that FEGLI documentation was in order. Several troublesome cases were identified and resolved.

3. Liaison with representatives of the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance was further improved, and procedures for handling special cases revised.

Compensation and Medical Claims

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2. The Branch Chief accompanied the Division Chief to a meeting with Chief, Finance Division on the documentation of overseas medical claims. Appropriate procedures were instituted.

3. Some significant approvals of FECA claims were obtained, particularly in the case of a polio death case.

4. Further effort was devoted to several long-standing BEC cases. One, dating back to 1953, is now being reviewed by the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board.

5. As shown in the statistical summary, 524 employee claims were handled by the Branch in FY 1960. Two hundred fifty-one of these claims were pressed by the claimants for reimbursement of medical expenses, or payment of compensation, or both. Of the 251 pressed claims, 111 were processed with the Bureau of Employees' Compensation, and 138 were processed under the Employee Overseas Program. One was processed internally as a BEC-type case and one as a split case.

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6. Excluding pending cases carried from the previous report, the following comparison may be made between the present FY 1960 report and previous FY reports of new cases received.

	<u>BEC</u>	<u>4(a)(5)(C)</u>
FY 1960	111	138
FY 1959	93	134
FY 1958	83	129
FY 1957	107	108
FY 1956	87	42
FY 1955	75	27
FY 1954	51	50
FY 1953	40	34

7. One hundred eighty-one Dependent cases were also handled by the Branch. The following comparison with previous reports may be made:

FY 1960	181
FY 1959	209
FY 1958	213
FY 1957	93

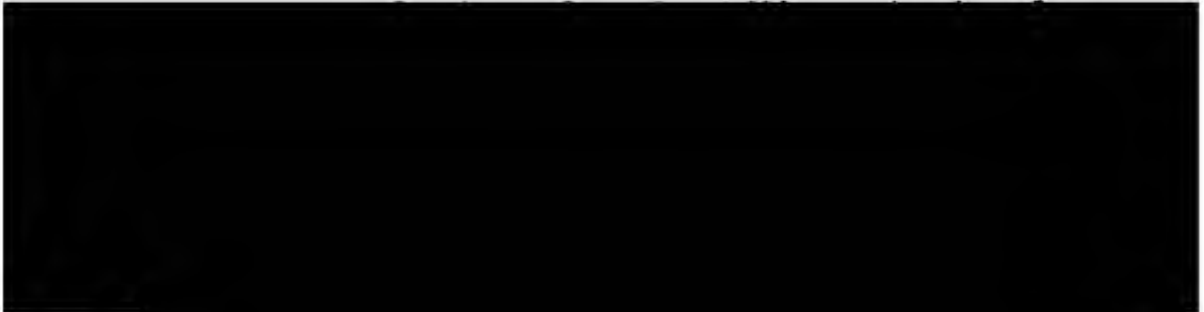
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8. It is significant to note that BEC and 4(a)(5)(C) claims in-



Social Security

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3. Steadily increasing inquiries and requests for advice and assistance in regard to Social Security matters and claims indicates a growing awareness on the part of offices, case officers and employees as to the significance of the legislation. The review of all retirement cases keyed to the possibility of concurrent Social Security coverage or qualification therefore is a further indication of the foregoing.

Unemployment Compensation

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Employee Counseling

1. There was a decrease in the number of counseling cases, 76 as compared with 114 in the previous period.

2. Indebtedness complaints numbered 139, a significant increase over the 87 in the previous period. It should be noted, however, that many letters are received in chronic cases. The new Branch procedure whereby chronic cases are referred to the Special Assistant to the Director of Personnel has met with success. The procedure has actually resulted in the separation of chronic offenders.

Pre-exit interviews, Exit-processing, and Associated activities

Statistics are included in Statistical Summary.

Recreation Program

1. The number of employees participating in the various recreational activities remained about the same as last year, approximately [REDACTED]. During the year two activities, a Fencing Club and a Horseback Riding Club, were received under new leadership and are enjoying considerable success.

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2. Working on the philosophy that all recreational activities should be employee desired, employee initiated, and employee operated, we have continually worked towards giving responsibility for as much of the operating details as possible to participating members. This office

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provides financial and administrative assistance as needed (within our limitations) and assists with elements of organization, security, schedules, reservations, outside contact, etc.

3. The Branch Chief accompanied the Executive Officer, Office of Personnel, to a meeting with the Inspector General to resolve possible discrimination problem in a Bowling league.

#### Newsletter

The new format and size of the Recreation Newsletter has been favorably accepted. New sources for material regarding informational highlights have been utilized. This permits writing of the Newsletter over a larger period of time and reduces the month-end rush and typing requirements.

#### Welfare Fund

1. During the past year 24 welfare loans were extended to employees. A considerable number of requests for loans evolved into other courses of action after counseling. A Branch representative also served as counselor/interviewer for applications for PSAS loans.

2. The consolidated bookkeeping system for the Welfare Fund and the Recreation Association worked satisfactorily, saving man-hours of work.

#### Charity Drives

1. The Agency conducted two charity drives during FY 1960. The major drive, conducted in the fall of 1959, was for the United Givers Fund. Our PSAS campaign was held concurrently with the UGF Drive. The spring (1960) drive benefited National Health and Joint Crusade.

2. The following figures show the result of the past two drive periods:

	<u>1958-1959</u>	<u>1959-1960</u>
UGF	\$104,773.00	\$100,000.00
National Health	23,630.68	23,298.15*
Joint Crusade	12,669.60	13,045.37
PSAS	<u>12,672.60</u>	<u>14,823.67</u>
TOTALS	\$153,745.88	\$151,167.19

\*There were two less health agencies in the campaign.

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### Blood Donor Program

1. As shown in the following figures, total donations in the period decreased:

	<u>1957-1958</u>	<u>1958-1959</u>	<u>1959-1960</u>
Blood Donors	1901 (158 donors per month)	1637 (135 donors per month)	1538 (128 donors per month)
Blood Replacements	84	100	115
Decrease in Donors	99		
Increase in Replacements	15		

2. In an effort to increase donations, the Branch has prepared a proposal for submission to the Director of Personnel.

### U. S. Savings Bond Campaign

1. The Agency participated successfully in the Government-wide Savings Bond Campaign held during May and June. As a result, 236 more employees began buying Savings Bonds, and bond purchase deductions increased by \$1,625 to a new total of \$36,500 per pay period. More than one and one quarter million dollars (\$1,266,675) worth of Savings Bonds at maturity were bought in FY 1960 by Agency employees in Headquarters. Payroll deductions saved to purchase these bonds amounted to \$945,383.

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2. Branch promotional efforts included an all-employee notice [REDACTED] signed by the Director, posting of more than 200 posters and bus placards, and distribution of informational inserts with salary checks. Continuing increases in bond sales are expected from planned distribution of another promotional piece with salary checks just after the upcoming pay increase takes effect.

### Miscellaneous Activity

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1. The Branch conducted many group briefings in the Office of Communications, Office of Security, FE Division, and [REDACTED] as well as hundreds of personal briefings.

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2. Several cases of a delicate nature were handled by a Branch representative.

3. Considerable time was devoted to improving over-all liaison with other Federal agencies.

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STATISTICAL DATA ON CERTAIN FUNCTION

1 July 1959 - 30 June 1960

Casualties Reported

1. Serious illnesses-----	123
2. Deaths-----	34

Retirement

1. Interviews-----	687
2. Service Credit-----	77
3. Retirement-----	51
4. Direct Refund-----	13
5. Death Benefits-----	28
6. Special Handling-----	115

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance

1. Agency Certification of Insurance Status-----	120
2. Death Claims-----	27
3. Request for Insurance-----	69

Unpaid Compensation

Total Claims-----	29
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Pre-exit Interviews, Exit-processing, Counseling, and  
Associated Activities

1. Resignations - Separations

Summer Employees-----	170
Retirement-----	49
Deaths-----	27
For Military Service-----	29
Other-----	

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GS-12 and Above Employees Included in Above  
Totals

In person-----	105
In absentia-----	26
Deaths-----	14
Retirement-----	18

2. Advanced Sick Leave-----	227
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3. Leave Without Pay, including maternity-----	421
4. Counseling-----	76
5. Indebtedness Complaints-----	139

Compensation and Medical Claims - Employee

1. Claims Activity	
Total Cases-----	524
New Claims Pressed-----	251
New Claims Not Pressed (CA-1)-----	273
2. Nature of Claims Processed	
Total Claims Processed-----	251
Medical Expenses-----	233
Compensation-----	8
Both-----	10
3. Ultimate Method of Processing	
Total Claims Processed-----	251
BEC	
BEC-----	111
4(a)(5)(C)-----	138
BEC Type-----	1
Split Case-----	1
4. Action Taken on Claims	
Total BEC Cases-----	111
Approved-----	22
Rejected-----	2
Withdrawn or Inactive-----	4
Pending-----	83
Internal	
Total 4(a)(5)(C) Cases-----	138
Approved-----	120
Rejected-----	8
Withdrawn or Inactive-----	0
Pending-----	10

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Total BEC-type Cases (approved)-----	1
Total Split Cases-----	1
Approved-----	0
Pending-----	1

Medical Claims - Dependents

Total Cases-----	181
Approved-----	153
Rejected-----	14
Withdrawn-----	0
Pending-----	13
Inactive-----	1

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## SECTION II

### Plans for Fiscal Year 1961

1. The Branch will continue its constant review of procedures for use in its casualty program.

2. With respect to medical claims the passage of H. R. 7758, Overseas Differentials and Allowances Act, will have a major effect on the number of claims processed by the Branch. This Act extends coverage of the overseas medical program to employees on TDY

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3. The Branch anticipates a continuation of the increased activity on the current MIA cases. The new case in this category will undoubtedly require considerable attention by the Branch.

4. With respect to the retirement program, the Branch expects a significant increase in the number of retirement applications processed since many employees heretofore eligible had delayed their retirement pending the establishment of their entitlement of the FEDERAL HEALTH BENEFITS ACT. Furthermore, increases may result from further attention devoted to the Agency's retirement program for those individuals who become eligible for retirement. It is expected that the entire retirement activity will consume an unusually high number of Branch man-hours.

5. The Branch is again recommending a trip by the Division Chief to the EE and WE areas in the hope that a trip to these areas might be as profitable as his trip to the FE area that resulted in a greater understanding by overseas personnel of their statutory entitlements.

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SECTION III

General Objectives of Fiscal Year 1962

No program changes are contemplated at the present time for Fiscal Year 1962.